

High-rises defy building code

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY

Most of the high-rise buildings are being constructed defying building code in the port city.

The real estate companies are constructing the high-rises without approval from the Department of Environment (DoE), Fire Service and Civil Defence, Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) and other concerned authorities.

The experts related with the sector fear that the buildings will smash down if an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale strikes the port city.

The risky high-rise buildings have been built in Haliashar residential area, Khulshi residential area, Sugandha residential area, Surson Road, Chatteshwary Road, Bahadarhat area, Basundara residential area, Nasirabad Abasik, Agrabad, Bahadarhat, Al Falah Gali, Port Connecting Road, Muradpur, Nasirabad, Kazir Dewri, Colonel Hat, Sirajuddaula Road, CDA residential area and GEC intersection

Over 1.82 lakh buildings have been constructed in the port city without following building codes

and Dewan Bazar.

DoE sources said the land developers and apartment entrepreneurs are constructing the multi-storey buildings violating the building codes with the help of corrupt officials of CDA, sources added.

According to Bangladesh Building Construction Act, it is obligatory to keep a 25-foot-space between an eight-storey building and the road in front of it while it must be at least 15 feet for six-storey buildings. Each building must be constructed 4.5 metres away from middle of the road.

Moreover, for constructing an eight-storey building concurrences from Fire Brigade, DoE, Wasa, gas and power authorities are mandatory. Keeping fire and smoke detectors, high power water spray system and carbon dioxide reducing system are also necessary for a high-rise, according to the building code that are not being followed.

CDA sources said over 1.82 lakh buildings have been constructed in the port city without following building codes. Besides, some devel-



Police Plaza, a high-rise in the port city.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

opers are constructing the high-rises changing the design approved by CDA.

The CDA in a recent drive in the port city found violations of building code in the high-rises constructed by 27 developer companies.

CDA Chairman Abdus Salam expressed anger over the issue of hill cutting at a confer-

ence. He said CDA would take action against the companies that are building high-rises violating rules.

DoE Director Jafar Alam said many developers start their construction works without clearance from the department while many

come for taking clearance after starting their construction works. DoE can not take action against the violators for lack of adequate manpower, he said.

Former CDA chief engineer Iqbal Hossain said the CDA can stop the construction of developer companies or the land grabbers for

violating building codes.

The constructions would bring hazard and misfortune to the city dwellers if an earthquake measuring 7 or 7.5 on the Richter scale strikes the city, said Prof Dr Jahangir Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

RISKY JOURNEY: The Dhaka-bound Chattala Express runs on a line and a rail engine on another line while the rickshaws and a motorcycle wait in between the lines risking life. The photo was taken from Kadamtali Rail crossing in the port city on Saturday.

Statistics office limps on

PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

The Statistics Bureau in Chittagong region has been experiencing a serious shortage of staff.

To make good the shortage of manpower, it sought 13 additional staff of different categories to collect the statistics about Chittagong district which is scheduled to start on February 26.

Sources at the statistics office here said they had been doing additional duty hampering their regular work.

Sources at Chittagong Regional Statistics office said they were always under pressure and it increased when they were to conduct major surveys like collecting statistics about the district.

Mentioning about the next economic census to be held next year, they said it would be very difficult to do the job for them with this workforce.

The Chittagong Zonal Statistics Office sources said they are facing a shortage of human resources at both city and upazila level in the district. There are only 38 staff,

out of the required 56, at different upazilas in the district.

Nine upazilas, out of 14, have no Upazila Statistical Officer (USO) for long. Chittagong Regional Statistics officer has been looking after the work of USOs as the posts have been lying vacant in nine upazilas, sources said.

The scenario is almost same in the Chittagong City Corporation areas. Thirteen posts of different categories have been lying vacant out of 24 posts. Like upazila areas, post of Thana Statician (TS), top post in the thana area, remained vacant in two major areas of the port city like Bandar and Pahartali, sources added.

There is also a shortage of manpower in the regional office in Chittagong district.

The present workforce is 10 against the need for 14. Seventeen posts, out of 32, have been lying vacant in Cox's Bazar district. The posts of USOs at six upazilas, out of eight upazilas in the district, have been lying vacant.

On condition of anonymity, the employees of this department said they have to

carry out several surveys and censuses throughout the year which becomes very tough for them due to the shortage of human resources.

According to them, they would have to do 20 surveys within June which is a very tough task for them. They said if the posts were not filled up immediately, it would be tough for them to do the next economic census.

They urged the government to fill up the vacant posts as early as possible. The employees alleged that the government gave appointments against some posts on different occasions at upazila level in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar but they managed to transfer themselves from here by using their political connection.

When asked Wahidur Rahman, regional statistics officer, admitting the shortage of manpower, said they have been managing the office with their extra efforts.

He said he informed the higher authorities about the manpower crisis which would soon be met with changes in the office.

theweekthatwas

Photography exhibition ends

A photography exhibition titled 'Beautiful Bangladesh' concluded at Theatre Institute in the port city on Sunday.

With a view to highlighting the panoramic beauty of Chittagong surrounded by hills, sea, river and greeneries, the exhibition was arranged with the support of Indian Assistant High Commission.

Indian Assistant High Commissioner Somnath Ghosh inaugurated the exhibition as the chief guest.

The exhibition featured a total of 30 works of six photojournalists working in the local and national dailies.

The photojournalists are Manzurul Alam Manju, Rashed Mahmud, Kamol Rudra, Rajesh Chakraborty, Habibiur Rob and Rabi Sankar Chakraborty.

Call to build hunger-free country

Awami League Presidium Member Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu MP called on all to stand united imbued with the spirit of Amar Ekushey to build a non-communal and hunger- and poverty-free country.

He was addressing a meeting on The International Mother Language Day and

Amar Ekushey organised by Awami League south district unit at his residence in the city on Thursday.

Babu said anti-liberation forces were plotting to obstruct the activities of war crimes tribunal.

He urged all the patriotic people to create movement against the quarters to foil their plots.

Awami League lawmakers Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Cheman Ara Taiyab and leaders Samsul Haque, Abul Kalam Chowdhury, Motaherul Islam spoke at the meeting with Unit Vice-President Jasim Uddin in the chair.

Drives to remove waterlogging

The Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) removed 11,000 trips of soil from different canals and ditches at Ward 41 to bring the waterlogging in the city at a tolerable level.

Mayor M Manjur Alam said this while presiding over its 29th general meeting at the CCC auditorium on Monday.

The meeting also decided to allocate CCC rented billboards and asked the officials concerned to acquire the unprotected lands of the corporation.

The meeting was told that CCC had engaged 5,000 workers, 30 drum trucks,



Visitors at the photography exhibition titled 'Beautiful Chittagong' at Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC) held from February 15 to 19.

STAR PHOTO

17 excavators and other modern equipment to remove the waterlogging problems in the city.

Three books launched

With a view to spreading education and

creating habit of reading of creative books among the youths, a gathering of writers and readers was held at Cheragi Pahar intersection on Monday.

The covers of three books were unveiled on the occasion.

Batighar organised the programme on its premises while Begum Mushtari Shafi was present as the chief guest.

The Prothom Alo Resident Editor Abul Momen, Chittagong City College Principal Harishankar Jaladus, poet Ovik Osman,

Prof Mahibul Aziz, poets Hafiz Rashid Khan, Khalid Ahsan and Mahbulul Haque were present.

The books include "Muktijuddher Galpa" by Mushtari Shafi, "Rabindranath Muslim Manos Bangladesh Oviatra" by Abul Momen, and "Ram Golam" by Harishankar Jaladus.

Poet Bishwajit Chowdhury presided over the function.

CCC to settle pending cases

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor Mohammad Manjur Alam on Saturday at a discussion assured that all appeals of pending cases regarding holding tax would be settled within a short time.

Addressing as the chief guest, mayor said a total of 25 review boards were formed for providing help to the city dwellers and resolving the pending cases.

He said the holding taxes, paid by the citizens, are used for the educational, health and other development sectors of the corporation. He urged the city dwellers to pay holding tax timely.

Panel mayor Chowdhury Hasan Mahmud Hasni, Chief Executive Officer Anwara Begum, Secretary Mohammad Samsuddoha and high officials were present at the discussion.